The White Slave

Or, "The Cross of Gold"

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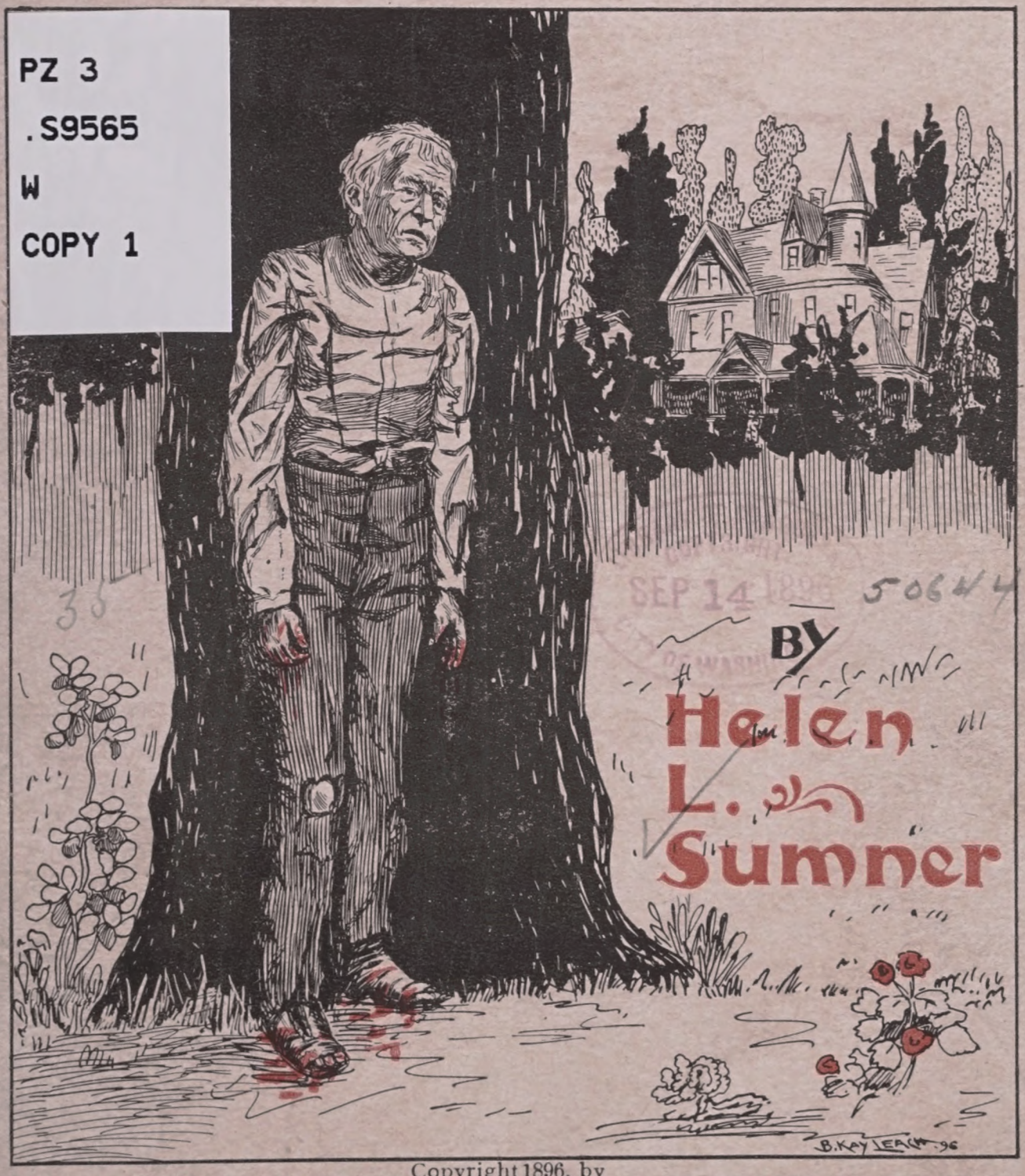

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BY

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Charles H. Kerr & Company, Publishers
56 Fifth Avenue, Chicago.

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THE WHITE SLAVE.

CHAPTER I.

"I've got to give up the struggle. I'm no good to any one on the face of the earth any longer."

The words were uttered by a tall, thin man, with long, bony, white hands and a gaunt, deeply-lined, chalk-colored face. He might have been handsome when he was younger, but now his once regular features seemed abnormally prominent, while his cheeks were sunken and his hollow black eyes seemed to have lost their luster and had only a hunted, haunted expression.

"Oh, come now, you must not get discouraged. Crops are going to be good this year, and next winter we shall all be on our feet again," rejoined his companion, a strongly built but prematurely bent man of perhaps fifty years of age. His face was of the honest, agreeable type which is often seen among the pioneers of the West, but it showed deep lines of suffering and anxiety and deeper lines of indomitable courage. He looked like a man whose willingness and desire to work was far greater than the strength of an iron constitution. Labor and hope might have been his two watchwords, if he had had any, through life.

"Next year! Oh, I'm tired to death of hearing about next year. What do I care about next year if it is always next year,—if this year is a never-ending year. Crops were good enough last year, but we had to sell at starvation rates. You know that well enough yourself."

"That was because of the over-production last year in the crops we had to sell. People know better this year and they haven't all raised the same thing."

"I don't know whether it was that or not. Jones was in last night and he says prices have been falling

on everything for thirteen years, ever since '73. He says they passed some kind of a bill in Congress that year that killed silver so it isn't money any more, and that that doubled the value of gold, so that we mustn't expect to get but half as much money for our grain as we used to do, at least unless they repeal that law."

"Pshaw! Jones is an old crank! The idea of silver not being money! That's all right. Next time I see Jones I'll just tell him that if silver isn't money he can just hand me over what he has in his pockets. I've heard a little of that kind of talk myself, and it just makes me mad! Why, do you suppose if I had $100 in gold and $100 in silver I would go and throw all my silver in the Gulf of Mexico just when I had my mortgage on the farm to pay off? And that's just what they try to make us believe the United States government did when it had its war debt to pay. Do you suppose if such a bill had been even brought up in Congress that the papers all over the country wouldn't have let us know it? Why, that's tomfoolery! In the first place, I happened to read the constitution of this country when I was a boy and I know that they would have to repeal that document before they could prevent silver being money. In the second place, I lived in this country myself in '73 and I would have known it if any such bill had been thought of. And in the third place, silver is money and there is no getting around that."

"Well, I don't know. I don't just see through Jones' proposition. But he says that some member of Congress or some one or other was bribed by England to doctor the bill so as to make it demonetize silver, and that it has been proven on them. I suppose, though, that the people whose duty it is to look after such things are more apt to understand them than a man like Jones is, way out here in the West and having his own business to tend to. I don't know about it and I don't suppose I care! I don't care for anything any more, except to die. I'm going to do it pretty soon, too. I feel it. Oh! I know I am a coward. But, you know, when death comes one can't help it, and as long as one can't

help it I don't know as it does any good to try not to be glad and relieved Anyhow, it wouldn't work, if I tried it. It doesn't matter to me any more what it is that has made it so hard to run a ranch and that is making it harder every year. Some years our crops are too poor and some years too large, but it is always too something. We did better in the first few years, when we were only getting things into shape and were looking forward with longing to the time when we would have all our land under cultivation and our trees would be tall and we wouldn't have any more Indian scares. That time has come, but somehow there seems to be something a thousand times worse than a wilderness surrounded by Indians to struggle against now. It doesn't matter to me any more, but if it is that law that is so hard on us I wish they would repeal it so you could have a chance, for you deserve it if any one in the world does."

The other man had been listening with his face in his hands. When his friend spoke of death he looked up as if to protest, but there was a look on the face opposite him which startled and restrained him. He had been used to that face and had never thought of death in connection with it, but now that he looked at it with the mere suggestion in his mind he saw something in it that the mask of familiarity had hidden from his eyes before, and he buried his face in his hands again.

Then when his friend had finished he got up and began wandering about the room, talking as he did so, but carefully ignoring part of what had been said.

"For my part, I am willing to trust these knotty questions of law to the people who have studied them all their lives. I wonder if I told you that Philip has tackled the monetary question. The fact is, he began studying it some years ago, but he said the other day that he was just arriving at a complete understanding of it. He says that when one succeeds in getting at the real question it isn't half as difficult to understand as it is made to appear, but that all sorts of rubbish figuratively speaking, has been thrown on top of

it, apparently to hide its importance, and that shoveling off the rubbish is a little like hunting for a gold mine. You have to sift everything to the very bottom in order not to overlook the most important things. He has studied both sides thoroughly and he is a great worker. His uncle in New York has sent him a lot of books and papers on the subject"

"Philip is an unusually bright boy. I believe you will have cause to be proud of him some day."

"Do you really think so? It has seemed to me sometimes that he has an unusually quick and accurate mental grasp of things, but then I have thought that being his father I would naturally think that. He was a wonderful orator when he was in school, and I have sometimes thought that he would like to be a statesman, but he hasn't had much chance. He expects to take the bar examinations in the summer, and then I suppose he will leave us and go to town."

When the two men said good-night there was an unusual feeling in their hand-clasp, and the more stalwart of the two said, with a little break in his voice, "We haven't been friends for twenty years for nothing, have we? If anything should ever happen to you, you know I would look after the girl as if she was my own, don't you?"

A month later a great sorrow had fallen over the hearts of all on the Nebraska farm, for even when death is the greatest joy possible to the one who is taken away, it is a sorrow, and a peculiarly pitiful sorrow, to the friends who have loved him and have longed to see other joys come to his lot. Another grave was dug under the cottonwood tree where they had laid his gentle wife many years before, and he was left at peace at last.

His beautiful young daughter became one of the Marsh children, and home seemed to have acquired a new interest for the members of that family, especially for the eldest son, Philip.

But one day a letter arrived from the East, an an-

swer was soon dispatched and a week later another arrived. One morning a few days after the receipt of the last letter the old, rickety single buggy was drawn up in front of the Marsh farm-house, and after the last half-tearful farewells were said, Laura Conway, Philip and his father drove away over the prairie.

The last words her foster father said to her were: "It's for the best, Laura, I am sure, for sister Faith can give you so many advantages that you could never have out here in the West. And you will love her. I know you will. Be sure and call her Aunt Faith. She will be so pleased. And tell her all about the children and what a man Philip has grown to be lately. Come, Phil, the train will be moving in a moment. We must be getting off."

But Philip found time for a last word in her ear. "Can't I come and bring you back some day, Laura?"

"Some day," the child answered.

"Good-bye."

"Good-bye."

After the death of her mother, Faith Marsh continued to live in the old New England farm-house in which she had been born, in which she had learned to love and from which she had seen her father, brother and lover go forth at the call of their country, the first and last never to return. There she had grown old and, with the passing years, she had grown gentler and sweeter and more compassionate.

When her mother was taken from her, her thoughts and affections had begun to cling more and more about her far-off western brother and his children. True, she had not seen him for more than twenty years and had never seen one of his children, while she often saw her sister and her two nephews from New York. But they had grown away from her simple life. She seemed to feel about them an arrogance of wealth. When she visited in their handsome New York home her innate refinement made her constantly, though almost unconsciously, ashamed of the gaudy display on every side.

Her sister and brother-in-law, she knew, were of the great 400, who, to the people of the United States, appear like a second set of Greek gods and goddesses on a second Olympus. But in spite of that knowledge she tried in vain to admire, and feel her distance beneath, the well groomed ladies who came to her sister's boudoir to talk about the dog show, and the faultlessly attired men with stomachs in sizes numbering off the years of their lives, who discussed the latest English actor and the latest English fad.

After such a visit she always went home thinking more and more about the Nebraska farm. And so when the letter came which told her that her brother's old friend, for whom he had done so much and with whom he had suffered so much, was dead and had left him his seventeen year old daughter to care for, she began to think out a plan.

"He has four children of his own," she said to herself, "but I couldn't have the heart to ask him for one of them. But this other child that he must take care of, I might have her."

Thus it happened that shortly after her father's death Laura Conway said farewell to the waving acres of grain among which she had been born and brought up, and was whirled away to a new home under the elm and oak trees of old New England.

CHAPTER II.

She had said that he could come for her some day, and four years later it seemed to him that that "some day" must have come. He had been working hard, and though a great deal more glory than lucre had thus far come to his lot, his business had at last demanded his presence in New York City for a few days and he had determined to take advantage of that fact to pay a visit to his aunt and her young guest.

Finishing his business sooner than he had expected, he decided to surprise them by arriving a day early, and thus it was that one bright morning of early summer a tall, distinguished looking young man of about twenty-five stepped from the train on to the platform of a little vine-covered New England station and asked the way to the home of Miss Faith Marsh. Down the road to the left and then up the lane to the right he walked, thinking all the time of the bent form of his father and of how his eyes, old before their time, would brighten again at sight of these daisy-besprinkled fields, of these elms by the road-side, of the soft grass under foot and of the old house he could just see at the end of the lane, with the ivy almost covering its front. He wondered if things had looked the same when his father and mother had wandered there hand in hand, whispering of all their young hopes and ambitions; if things had looked the same when his grandfather had seen them last as he went down the lane with his only son, both clothed in the blue; if things had looked the same when his father and mother had said good-bye to the home of their youth twenty-five years before to make a new home in a new country.

He came to a gate and a stile, a real old-fashioned stile, and stopped a moment. Suddenly, as he was looking at the broad ivy-covered porch, a young girl, dressed all in white, came down the steps, followed by a slender, dapper young man. Though he had never

seen her so beautiful, the man on the stile knew her instantly But the young man he did not know, and he felt the delightfully doubtful sensation with which he had undertaken this visit giving place to a sinking of the heart as he watched the pair.

They went around the house without seeing him, and then he walked slowly up the path and knocked at the open door of the big, old-fashioned hall.

"Come in," called a sweet voice from somewhere within, and he stepped over the threshold and stood a moment gazing about him.

"Aunt Faith," he said, hesitatingly.

"Philip!" he heard uttered in trembling tones, and in a moment his arms were about the form of the little old maid aunt whom he had never seen, yet whom he had known intimately from his childhood.

The tears were in her eyes, but she was laughing as she said: "Lean down and let me kiss you. Why, you are so tall! I feel as if I might be a girl again and my father might have come back from a long journey. And you look like him, too. You have the same eyes and the same firm mouth. But your brow and hair are more like your father's. And there is something about you that is just like your mother, but I can't tell what. Why, they have all come back to me in you, father and brother and friend!"

She led him into the shady sitting room and there they sat side by side on the little hair-cloth sofa like two lovers, and laughed and talked and read each other's eyes.

She was small and slight in build, but her face was like his father's, except that it was younger and less careworn. And yet in the first hour he could see that life had not been as smooth and easy for this lonely woman as they in the West had thought, and that her eyes were not as bright as they might have been.

As for her, although for years she had thought of this boy as the bright flower of the family, she was far from disappointed in her nephew. That he would com-

bine all the good qualities of his grandfather, grandmother, father and mother, the four beings whom she had most admired and loved in the world, except one, who had fallen at Gettysburg, she had expected, and yet there was something else about this handsome young man, something that she, with her subtle senses, recognized as making him almost of another race from any one she had ever known.

"Have you seen Laura?" she asked at last. "Only in the distance! Oh! that was your cousin with her, George Garrison. He comes up to see us often in the summer. You know they were all here for a while last year. He has only been here a few days. I was sorry to have him just when you were coming, but of course it could not be helped. I suppose you know that the rest of the family have gone to Newport."

They heard voices outside and she went to the door, saying, "Wait a moment and I will send Laura in to see you. She will be so surprised."

"My cousin! He is rich and could give her everything, while I am poor and could give her nothing," was the thought in his mind as he rose and stood waiting in the shadowy room.

In a moment he heard the rustle of skirts and a white robed figure stood in the doorway. One second she stood there, and then, with a little cry, she came towards him, both hands outstretched.

As he looked down at her he could see that her face was flushed and her eyes were drooping, but he thought it was because of shame and regret for the last words she had said to him. He took her hand and made some commonplace remark. In a second she stiffened up and glanced at him, and he thought she looked relieved.

Then his aunt came in and he was introduced to his cousin. The latter was a sallow, keen-eyed young man of probably twenty-six or seven, with something of his cousin's firm expression about the mouth. Though dressed in the height of the fashion, he seemed to have more of the shrewd, capable business man about him than of the society dandy.

As the two cousins clasped hands their eyes met, and for a moment each studied the face opposite him, so like his own in general outline and yet so totally different from his own in everything that shows either character or education.

The girl glanced from one to the other, and the elder woman saw her lip quiver suddenly and the tears well up in her eyes.

CHAPTER III.

THAT night Philip Marsh was sitting by the open window of his room, his chair tipped back, his feet on the sill and his hands deep in his pockets, when there was a light knock on the door, and at his answer his cousin entered and proposed that they should take a stroll and a smoke together.

"I don't smoke, but I will go with you with pleasure," he answered.

The moon was full and its light gave the two cousins, walking side by side, opportunity to watch the changing expressions of each other's faces as they conversed. At first they spoke only of family affairs, but the two families had been so long separated that there was little common ground in that subject, and at last the elder asked:

"By the way, I remember that my father used to send you reams of literature on finance several years ago. How did you decide to stand on that question?"

The other man glanced at his cousin, a keen, inquiring look in his eyes.

"I decided to stand for gold and silver," he said.

"I thought likely. I wonder if we could discuss the subject without getting too hot over it."

"I am sure we can. I think we can settle a good many points by a simple admission from one side or

the other, and when those points are settled the question is really very simple. But to begin with I would like to have one thing understood, and that is that we are not talking about a double standard but about a single standard composed of two metals, gold and silver."

"Certainly. Well, to put the matter in a nut-shell, it is simply as to whether we shall have gold for our only foundation money or whether we shall have gold and silver."

"I will start out with an admission, and it is that if we once got onto a gold basis and were not smashed into a thousand pieces in getting there, we might be prosperous on that basis. Personally I don't think we would be, because I don't think there would be a large enough circulating medium, but no one can really know how it would work, for the reason that an exclusively gold basis has never been tried before in the history of the world."

"Agreed, thus far, only I think it would work admirably. I can't see any reason why it should not. We claim that gold alone would make a more stable basis than gold and silver combined. You claim that gold and silver together, with either one as the legal measure of the other, makes just as stable a basis, and I admit that if there was an agreement between the principal nations of the earth giving free and unlimited coinage to both metals at a fixed ratio, the two together could not help but be just as stable money as either alone. But it is generally supposed that we are on a gold basis now, and we are not smashed into a thousand pieces yet."

"You are right. It is so supposed. But as a matter of fact, though legally we are on a gold basis, practically we are only slowly going to that basis. Now, by all first principles of good finance there can be in a country, in addition to a certain amount of basic money (gold and silver combined in this country prior to 1873 and gold alone now), the same amount or less of other coin or paper to represent that basic money, but there

can't be one penny more, for if there was, that one penny would be based on nothing but wind, and in case of a run on the government could not be redeemed. Isn't that so?"

"Come now, you are trying to get me into a hole. You are trying to make me acknowledge that this country is not on a sound financial basis to day because it has about twice as much silver and greenbacks in circulation as it ought to have. Well, between you and me and the moon, that is true enough, but we are going to remedy that defect by cutting down the silver and greenbacks until together they equal the gold. We aren't through with our job yet. Just give us a chance to finish up."

"In the meanwhile you are in grave danger of having a disastrous run on the United States treasury. But let us go on. The money of a country represents the total value of the property of a country, does it not? Well then, if there are a certain number of dollars in a country the property of that country is worth just that number of dollars, and if there is only half that number of dollars the property is worth only half that number of dollars."

"Just so. It is simply a question as to whether we shall have the number two represent the circulating medium of the country or the number one. You say two and we say one."

"Now you say your work isn't done, that we have not reached that one point yet, for the reason that the government itself is bolstering up on its credit a great lot of silver coins and greenbacks which are really based on nothing but wind."

"Yes. The government by that means breaks the fall from a silver and gold to a single gold standard. Of course all values have got to fall to just one-half what they were under the old standard, but you see we are letting them down easy, so as to avoid the chance of everything getting smashed into a thousand pieces, as you say."

"Then you see why we are not practically on the single gold standard yet."

George Garrison threw away the stump of his cigar, stretched himself and laughed.

"I only wanted to know if you really saw that," he said.

"Well, do you want me to prove to you this proposition: Falling prices paralyze business?"

"No. Nobody but a business idiot would deny that. But business will come up again like a mushroom when we get things down to a solid basis. And anyway, it is necessary to have the gold standard, business or no business. England, Europe, repudiation, don't you know? But perhaps we can have an international agreement pretty soon. We are perfectly willing to have an international agreement."

"Come now. You know just as well as I do that an international agreement means an agreement with England, and that as England is the great creditor nation of the world, the gold standard simply washes money from every direction onto her shores. When you can make an assembly of all the rich men of this country give away the greater proportion of their wealth to the poor of the country you can then begin to hope for an international agreement. But even then it would be a good deal to expect one country to do for other countries what one citizen of a country would do for other citizens of the same country. But you know perfectly well that the world will be too cold to be habitable when England voluntarily agrees to restore bimetallism."

The other laughed again. "I guess you are right," he said. "But that simply means that we have got to stick to our gold standard."

"You mean to say that we might just as well not have had the Revolutionary War, that in spite of that war we still have to do just what England commands. I am not ready to believe that, and I hope sincerely I shall never have cause to believe it. But now as for the rest of the world, it would be glad enough to follow the lead of the United States. Isn't that so?"

"Perhaps,—well, probably. But the United States

will never lead in that direction, so they will never have a chance to follow her."

"And as for repudiation, every debt that was made payable in gold would be paid in gold and every debt that was made payable in sound money would be paid in sound money."

"Well, but what are you kicking about anyway? We have legally the gold standard now, and in a few years we will have it practically. All the big civilized countries have it too, so what under the sun is the matter with it? What are you silver fellows kicking up such a row for,—and stirring up kicks all over the country among people whose head-pieces can no more hold this subject than they can the Washington capitol? If you would leave us alone we would have things fixed and in good working order in a few years."

"We are kicking for two reasons. One is that you are destroying the natural system of finances, the one which has existed since the beginning of the world, and are substituting for it a theoretical system of your own which is being tried for the first time within the knowledge of man. We maintain that under that system there would not be a large enough circulating medium to keep civilization in running order. You maintain that there would. The other reason we are kicking is that the business stagnation that you speak of so glibly as necessary for some years, until your scheme is in working order, means physical, mental and moral ruin for the vast majority of the inhabitants of this country. It means that this free republic of ours is to be made a vast whirlpool of insanity, crime and starvation. When you get your scheme in nice working order, what are you going to have to work it on? It is all very well to talk about our having a choice between the gold and silver standard and a single gold standard! Our choice is simply between prosperity and ruin."

The other man raised his eyebrows.

"Oh! So that is what you are driving at. Come now, old fellow, don't you worry about the people. We'll look after those who can't look after themselves.

The working people of this country live too high, anyway. It would be an excellent thing for them to learn economy."

Philip Marsh looked into his cousin's face and then said slowly, "If you say that the toilers, the producers of wealth of this country, live too high and ought to learn economy, what would you say about the rich idlers? But, pshaw! there is no use in arguing with you on that question. We two are simply looking for different things, that is all. You are looking for the best good of the rich few and I am looking for the best good of the poor masses. In the single gold standard you find what you want, and in the bimetallic standard I find what I want. If you were looking for a lost jewel and I was looking for a lost child, and you found your jewel, it wouldn't satisfy me, and if I found my child it wouldn't satisfy you."

"Nevertheless, the best good of the rich is the best good of the poor, don't you know?"

"In other words, if one man has $100 and another man has $1, it is better for the second man to let the first get $100 more in order that he himself might get about two cents more, than for him to insist on laws under which their wealth would increase proportionately. I tell you I am for gold and silver, the money of the constitution of the United States of America. As our bodies need water our civilization needs money. Take away all water from our body and we die; take away all money from our civilization and it dies. Take away hydrogen from our water and what have we left? An inflammable gas. Take away silver from our money and what have we left? An unstable, abnormally inflated bubble which can no more take the place of sound money to our civilization than oxygen can take the place of water to our bodies. In unmistakable terms gold and silver cry to the people of this country, 'United we stand; divided we fall.' You say that the commercial value of silver has fallen, and I ask you what would happen to the commercial value of wheat if all the people in the world could suddenly be induced to

believe that wheat was poison and should stop using it as food? And what would happen to the commercial value of gold if the mints of the world should be closed to it as they are to silver? You say that silver is produced cheaply now, and I say that the greatest authorities on that subject declare that on an average the cost of producing an ounce of silver is greater than the cost of producing an ounce of gold. And yet all we want is that sixteen ounces of silver shall equal one ounce of gold. You say that you are afraid of giving the silver mine owners a good thing. First I would like you to think of this, that if by establishing a bimetallic standard you are giving the silver mine owners a good thing, what are you doing for the gold mine owners by establishing a single gold standard? Second, think of this, that most mines which produce either silver or gold produce both in varying proportions; 'they are wedded by God Almighty in the earth.'"

"And I tell you, my young cousin, that I have seen more of the world than you have, and that I am for myself and company, and don't you forget it!"

"There! Now you say what you mean. That is bed rock. Your arguments for an internaicnal agreement are of the class that were used by the Tories in this country in 1776. And your arguments for a single standard are of the class that were used by some people in this country for negro slavery. The only difference is that you use those arguments for white slavery."

CHAPTER IV.

"No, Aunt Faith, I will not ask her to be my wife. And I will not allow her to know that I care anything for her, never. If it was necessary I would take pains to make myself disagreeable to her in order that she should not care for me, but should learn to love my cousin, but that isn't necessary. She loves him now."

"Philip! Philip! Why do you say that? The girl loves you. She has loved you for years."

"Tut, tut, only a childish fancy! She is grown up now. But if I thought she cared for me to-day I would leave here without ever seeing her again. Then she would get over it. Pride would come to her rescue. That girl deserves the very best things of this world, and I can't give them to her. I never can. You know I would give everything, everything in the world except her own happiness and her own good, to have her, to know that she loved me, but I will not give that. I will never give that. And I believe she loves my cousin, and I am glad of it, yes, glad, for he can give her everything and I can give her nothing but my love, and love, a man's love for a woman, needs backing, always."

"Why do you say that you can give her nothing? I am perfectly out of patience with you. The idea of a young man, only twenty-four years old, with body and mind perfect, in a free country like this, with just as good a chance to be President as any one, if he wants to be, saying that he can't have a wife because he can't give her the good things of this earth! I am out of patience with you."

"Aunt Faith, I will tell you what I mean. Since 1873 there has been a certain law in this free land of ours, which is governed by the people and for the people, which even its most ardent supporters acknowledge to be greatly in the interest of the man who loans money and greatly against the interest of the man who

borrows money. My father, as you know, to help a dear friend in the greatest need, borrowed some money about eighteen years ago. Soon afterwards this law was passed and it has been crushing him ever since. From time to time he has had to borrow more to pay the interest on the first amount and to feed and clothe his family, for this same law has made prices of farm products so low that a farm can do little more than pay for itself and gives the farmer only the barest pittance with which to buy for himself necessaries, the prices of which have either not fallen at all or not perceptibly, in reward for his thought and labor. To-day his total indebtedness is just twice in dollars what it was on the day that law was enacted and has reached the full value of everything he has in the world. My father is an honest man, and would give his life a thousand times over rather than that his honest debt should not be paid. He knows that his property now is worth that debt, but he knows that if it was paid there would be nothing left for his wife and children. But now let me tell you something. In 1872 my father could have sold a certain amount of his crops, with every kind of grain he grows represented in that amount, for $101. To-day he can sell the same amount, with the same quantities of the same grains in that amount, for only $65. You can see that if that debt had been paid back in the same year in which it was made he could have paid it with 65 portions of the food material which he raises, while to-day it would take 101 portions, and that if it had been paid then the creditor could only have bought 65 portions of that food material with it while to-day he could buy 101 portions. What is more, the price of farm products is still steadily going down, so that every year it would take more of everything my father can raise to pay that debt. And every year as the value of the crop of the farm decreases the value of the farm itself decreases. You may say that if that is so, he had better sell out immediately and start out on a new line, but he can't do it. He was born and brought up on a farm and has never in his life turned his hand to any-

thing but farming. And he couldn't do it now. He has been growing old lately, not old in years, but old and broken just the same. Besides, he knows that if he gave up the farm it would leave me with the whole family to support. He won't do that. I have tried to induce him to, but he won't. It would be much easier for me in the end, for we could manage somehow, but I can't tell him that. He says that I must have my chance unhampered while I am young. Then there is another thing that makes it impossible to urge that on him, and that is that it would break his heart to leave the old place. It would kill him and my mother too. When you think of all the years of work, work, work that they have put on that place, of all the associations that cling about it—no! they must stay there as long as they live. My father, not having tried to sell, doesn't know how the farm is decreasing in value, and if I can help it he never shall. I know that at the present rate of decrease, within five years the mortgage on the place will be a good deal more than its value. But if to-day that farm wasn't worth a single little gold dollar to any one else on the face of the earth, without it life itself wouldn't be worth very much to my father and mother, and you may rest assured that as long as they live, if it costs me all, instead of one, of my selfish personal ambitions, they shall call that farm their home, that very spot which they, with the loving labor of years and years, have transformed from a dry and barren wilderness into one of the most beautiful garden spots on earth. There, where they made their first home together, where their children were born and where one is now buried, where they have labored and loved and grown old together, they must remain until—a better home is ready for them."

He paused a moment. His aunt was weeping silently. "Now you see," he went on, "it is not only to my uncle's class, the creditor class, that we owe this money, but directly to my uncle. His money is constantly increasing in purchasable value as our produce is constantly decreasing in marketable value. The gulf

is constantly widening. They are growing richer and we are growing poorer. If you had an uncut, unpolished diamond which would you give it to, the man who could do nothing but put it back in the earth from which it came or the man who could have it cut and polished and set to adorn some great place in the world?"

The old maid was trembling and the tears were rolling down her cheeks, but she stood, as if defiant, in the middle of the room, and said in a low, choking voice, "I would give my diamond to the man whose very touch would make it the most beautiful jewel on earth."

An hour later he was sitting alone in his room, in darkness save for a flood of moonlight from the window, which fell on his head and shoulders and then full on the door beyond. There was a light tap and he started, pulled himself together, and called, "Come in," thinking it was his cousin.

The door opened slowly. He looked up. It was a white figure instead of a dark that stood in the opening, the figure of a woman in a soft, light dress with a red rose pinned in its folds. The man, this strong, self-reliant, yet passionate man, was for a moment spellbound. Then he started forward, but quick as thought she had closed the door behind her and stood with her back against it, her head thrown back, showing the white column of her throat, her white face set and determined and her deep blue eyes sparkling.

"I love you," she said.

He started back, confused, abashed, embarrassed. He tried to say something, anything, but he could remember no words. He stared at her and she stared back. He longed in every fiber of his being not to have to answer in words, just to take that beautiful thing in his arms. His soul struggled with his heart until in a moment he thought he would go mad. Then he turned his eyes away and like a great wave all the resolutions of his manhood rushed back over him and he was strong.

"Why have you come here?" he asked, in a low, husky voice.

"I love you," came back in strong, sweet, vibrating woman's tones.

"Has my aunt told you of our conversation?"

"I love you," was his only answer.

He felt that he would go crazy. "But I will never marry you," he exclaimed.

"I love you." The voice was only sweeter.

He turned full upon her again. Her eyes were bright as ever. "You don't know what you are saying. I can be nothing to you, can do nothing for you. I am poor, I tell you. I can't support you. I won't support you. My cousin is rich. He loves you. He can give you everything on earth you may want. You love him. You know you do. You have got to love him."

"I love you." There was a barely perceptible accent on the last word.

It was maddening. He was trembling like a leaf and his eyes were blazing. "Girl, stop saying that. If you say it again I will choke you. I tell you, I will. You are talking foolishness. You are killing me. I will not hear you say that again. Go away from here. Leave my room."

Her head had sunk upon her breast and two great tears were rolling down her cheeks, but she still stood her ground.

"I love you," she said, though it was only a low sob.

In a second his arms were about her and he was choking her with wild, mad kisses.

CHAPTER V.

THREE years passed by and in a certain Nebraska town there was a little house which Philip Marsh called home and over which Laura, the beautiful young mother of his two children, a boy of two and a baby girl, presided.

Three years passed by and the day came when, under the spreading branches of a great elm tree, shading the roomy farm-house, a reclining chair was placed. In it Philip's father was lying, pale and thin, but with bright

eyes and smiling lips, while at his side sat his brave little wife, darning the stockings that never all get darned, but that are always on hand to exemplify the saying that "woman's work is never done." It was the first time he had been out of the house since the winter snow was on the ground, for he had had a severe attack of pneumonia, brought on by exposure during a terrible storm, and had been delirious for weeks. In his wild ravings during that time there had seemed to be one thought uppermost in his mind, one thought round which all others clung. Night after night and day after day he had tossed on his bed, with fever parched lips and burning eyes, and always in his delirium he had talked of the mortgage on his home.

"If I could only pay off the mortgage when it comes due. The first of June, 1893—June, 1893. I must have the money then, every cent of it. I must work, work, work, work. If I could only pay off the mortgage so that the children could have the farm. We couldn't bear to lose the old place, could we, Jennie? If only the children could have it after we are gone. They would take care of it and love it. When they were tired out with struggling in the great world they would come back here where they played as little children, and they would remember how happy and innocent they were and they would be happy and innocent again, with the memory of childhood in their hearts, and they would go back into the world rested and strengthened and comforted. And their little children would come and would play all over the place, and everything would smile at them, the trees and the grass and the grain. Oh! if I could only pay the mortgage. June, 1893. How many years more have I? I can't remember. Oh, yes, I have plenty of time. The crops are fine this year. I can lay by a lot of money in the fall to pay the mortgage. No, I don't think I will have a new overcoat this winter. My old one can be mended. Made over for Jack, did you say? That's right. The little fellow needed it, and there must have been enough good cloth to make a nice one for him. It's going to be a mild winter, and I will wear my heavy coat. When it is

cold I can button it up tight and wear the new muffler Faith made for me. How many years did you say? Only one! We must work harder than ever, Jennie. Only one year more. But we can do it. I know we can. Then we can rest, when the mortgage is paid. Don't tell Philip. He is young and he must have a chance. We must not pull him back, not for anything in the world. Eighty cents, did you say? Only eighty cents? Why, we used to get $1.40, you know, in '72. Only eighty cents a bushel for wheat! Jennie, we can't pay off the mortgage next year. We'll have to get them to extend it for a few years more. Of course they will! The place is worth more than the mortgage on it, a good deal more. Why, all the work of our lives is on this place, all the work and all the thought, and that is worth a good deal, I tell you. Not worth it! Why, man, you are crazy. I know it is worth more than that. I'll go to some one who understands the value of a good farm all under cultivation. How much do you offer me for such a place? Why, you are making game of me, because you think I am getting old. I could have sold it for that twenty years ago. Not worth as much now as it was then! I don't believe you. I won't believe that I have nothing, less than nothing, to show for twenty years of labor. I won't believe it. I am so tired. It seems to me I can't work any more. And I know you are just as tired, Jennie, though you never say you are. I sometimes think your work has been even harder than mine. But we'll rest after a while, Jennie. Our work will be done when the mortgage is paid."

When at last he had wakened up to recognize the figures round his bed, his little wife, who had nursed and cared for him so carefully for more than three months, had dropped the care on other shoulders and had gone to bed in another room, and now, in early summer, the two were convalescing together.

"Do you remember when we planted this tree?" he asked, looking up at the green foliage above him.

"Indeed I do. It was the day we arrived. In the evening we planted the tree by the light of the campfire, and oh, don't you remember how we joined hands

over the poor little slender stick and danced around it, and you said we would have it for our family tree? And when you said that, I was so afraid it would die and I watered it and took such good care of it that it was the first thing that was the least bit green on the place."

"Yes, and don't you remember the first time Philip was ever taken outdoors we laid him down in the shade of that tree and told them both, the tree and the baby, to grow up together and always to be good friends?"

There was the sound of horses' feet on the road near by and the mother raised her head from her work. "I believe that must be Philip now," she said. "He is early."

But as the horseman came in sight they saw that it ws not their son but a neighbor, who flung himself from his horse and came quickly towards them, as if in some excitement.

"Hello! Glad to see you out," was his greeting, as he took the invalid's white hand in his rough red one and shook it, at the same time mopping his wet forehead with a red bandana handkerchief.

"Say," he went on, without waiting for any reply, "you hain't got nothing in the banks in town, hev ye? Fur if you hev you'd better get it out double quick. I thought as I'd stop an' tell yer, bein' as yer son isn't round jist now, but they're hevin' a fearful run on the banks an' some folks say as they can't all pay an' 'll hev to shet up their doors. The're folks standin' in line way out in front of the First National. I saw 'em myself, an' over at the Savings Bank there was sich a crowd they was jammin' in the doors. An' the town's all excitement, I jist tell yer."

He paused, out of breath, and just then another horse came trotting swiftly up the driveway, and this time Philip himself dismounted and came up to his father and mother, with a smile and a cheerful word on his lips.

"Is this true, that they are having a run on the banks in town, Philip?" said his father.

A little frown came between the son's brows. "Yes,"

he answered. "But it isn't going to amount to much. They are all solid, you know."

"But isn't all your money in the First National?" was the mother's anxious inquiry.

"Yes, and it is going to remain there until I want it, too. I don't believe in this thing of everybody's running to a bank and drawing out their deposits, simply on a vague scare. Ten to one of the people who have drawn out their money to-day will deposit it in the same bank again to-morrow."

Thus he reassured his father and mother, though all the while he saw before his eyes the doors of the First National Bank, as he had seen them half an hour before, with a great white sign hanging on them which read, "Closed," and all the while the words on a slip of yellow paper in his pocket kept ringing in his ears, the words: "Mortgage can not be renewed. Must have entire amount immediately or foreclose."

"Look here, you are my last hope. I have tried every one in the world I can think of! I have done everything. I tell you I have got to have the money, and you have got to get it for me some way."

"And I tell you you can't mortgage that farm for one dollar to any one on the face of this globe, and as for your personal credit, there are thousands of men in this country to-day with personal credit as good as yours who can't get a nickel on it. I tell you there isn't any money. That's what's the matter. What we ought to have here in circulation is cornered in New York and London, and we people might just as well try to put out the sun as to try to get a penny of it. And if you got that money and sent it to your uncle it would only be so much more in the corner. But you can't get it. Precious little good they'll get out of foreclosing, but you've got to let them do it and lump it. That's all there is about it."

"What! The mills closed!"

"Yes, they say they can't get money enough to run them any longer."

"But what are the people going to do? They will have to go away."

"Some have gone already, but I guess they might as well stay here. Things are closing down all over New England. It's that Wilson bill."

A party of neighbors was gathered on the porch of the old New England farm-house. They had dropped in after their early suppers to discuss the news of the hour, the closing of the mills which gave employment to hundreds of men and women in the vicinity.

It was a thrifty neighborhood. The farmers were poor and worked hard for their scanty living, but few of them were in debt and they knew no better lot. The mill workers furnished a steady market for their produce, so that what little they had was at least secure, but now that the mills were closed they saw with consternation their own means of livelihood slipping out from under them. In addition, they saw that unless the mills reopened or the mill hands could find work elsewhere, they were likely to be just so many paupers quartered on the community.

Just as they were in the height of their discussion a carriage drew up in front of the house, and a tall, slim, sallow young man alighted and came up the steps It was George Garrison, who had arrived unexpectedly from New York. He spoke pleasantly to the people, but at his coming they began to disperse and soon he and his aunt were left alone.

"I was all tired out with the work," he said, "so I thought I would come up for a day or so of rest. This has been such a busy summer. I haven't had time to get off for a moment."

"But tell me, are the mills likely to be closed for long? And what are the poor people going to do?"

He answered her questions by a counter-question: "Do they think it is the Wilson bill?"

"Yes, but—"

He gave a sigh of relief. "That's all right," he said. He dropped back into an easy chair with a little grating laugh. "That's all right. But look here. I'll tell you something if you will keep mum." He leaned for-

ward. "It isn't the Wilson bill at all. We are putting a little pressure to bear on the Senate to induce it to repeal the Sherman bill. A little pressure—that's all. We are drawing in the money—temporarily, don't you know? But mark my word, the money question,—money, is of more importance than all the tariffs that were ever made and that were never made put together."

CHAPTER VI.

THE next winter the Marsh family lived in a little cottage on a side street of the Nebraska town where Philip had located as a young lawyer seven years before. It was a comfortable cottage, but very small, and there was only a little square patch of grass in front and one or two switches stuck in the ground to represent trees. On either side, close up against theirs, were larger houses, and directly across the dusty street there was a grocery store and a meat market.

Philip's younger brothers and even his sister tried their best all winter long to secure work of some kind, but there seemed to be nothing for them to do. Only discouragement and tales of worse need than their own met them on every side. One of the boys talked of going to the city where a friend of his had secured temporary employment, but in a week or so the friend came back telling the old grinding story of no pay for the work he had done and no prospect of anything but starvation for the seekers after an honest livelihood in the cities.

But somehow they lived. Philip worked hard over everything he could get to do, and always came home from his office with a cheerful, hopeful word for the helpless ones at home.

His father did not seem to recover his strength as he ought, and spoke little except to his two-year-old grandson and his baby granddaughter. When he began to walk out occasionally with the little boy he always

turned to the east, to the direction where he knew was the home of his childhood, and away from where stood, among the trees he and Jennie had planted, the home he and Jennie had made, now the abode of strangers. Always he wore his little bronze Grand Army button, and sometimes when he saw some one else wearing a like button he would stop and speak and the two would recall recollections of their martial days. Others, even his friends and those who had been his neighbors on the old place for years, he seldom seemed to want to talk to, and sometimes when they spoke to him he would give rambling, half-coherent answers.

Laura and the gentle little mother tried in every way to help husband and son and make things easier for him, at the same time encouraging by words and cheerful looks his brothers and his sister, who felt their dependence keenly but were utterly unable to assist in any material way. The two children were the light of the household.

But just before Christmas their grandmother sickened and died, and after he had followed the long black hearse up the hill to the dry, barren burial ground of the town their grandfather didn't go out any more. But the babies didn't mind that, for he would sit by the fire and play with them by the hour, and tell them wonderful stories that the oldest even could not understand, but that made the eyes of both dilate with interest; stories of heroes and battles and great patriots and great statesmen, stories of the forming and upbuilding and defending of the republic that he had loved so well. To the others, even to Philip, his eldest and best beloved, he seldom spoke except when something would remind him of a war experience, and then he would tell the story. Sometimes he would tell things that they had heard before, but more often it would be something entirely new and he would linger over every detail as if he were living it over again.

Thus the winter passed and spring came on, and there were rumors all through the land of murders, of suicides, of insanity, of strikes, of risings among the starving people.

And one morning when Philip went to call his father he was gone. His bed had not been slept in and they could not find him in the neighborhood or in the town. He was gone and no one had seen him go.

No words could ever tell the story of those days and weeks of anguished search, of the love and fear, of the hope and despair, of the agony of uncertainty shutting out every pang. No words could paint the horror of the scenes the searchers witnessed in that terrible time, that time when first they saw the ravenous undercurrent of our sea of civilization, the transparent undercurrent that in our daily lives we all could see and that yet we all gaze through and see not.

"I had a strange dream last night," said Philip one morning at the breakfast table, "and I have determined to follow its suggestion. You may think I am superstitious, but somehow I have a feeling that the dream was sent as a suggestion by which to find father."

He had only just returned from a careful search of one of the large cities of the central states, where he had been called to identify, if possible, the body of a man who had been found drowned in the river, and he looked haggard and almost spent with care and anxiety.

It was a sad little company to which he spoke. Even the two children had felt the influence of the dark cloud spread over the hearts of the older ones, and for some time the little boy had spoken only in whispers to his baby sister about grandpa who used to play with them and tell them stories. Laura, to whom her father's old and faithful friend had ever been dear as her father himself, was almost broken-hearted with the weight, not only of her own grief and anxiety, but of the awful sorrow she could see in her husband's face. She had been alone a good deal during the last few weeks, for all the others had been engaged night and day scouring the country in search of some trace of their father. But always, when they would return with no clue, no hope, Laura was the one to cheer them up and send them out again to search once more where they had searched many times before.

They all looked up when their brother spoke this

morning, but there was nothing but despair written on their faces.

"I'm afraid it is no use," one said.

"What was your dream?" asked Laura.

"That I saw father and mother standing side by side in the old parlor of grandfather's house. Everything seemed to be just the same as it is now, only it seemed as if the picture of grandfather in his army uniform was new. Mother had on a white dress and father wore the Union blue, and they both looked very young. And Aunt Faith was there and she looked young too, but she had on a black dress and there was some one else who had on a black dress, and that was grandmother. It seemed as if something was going on, but I couldn't remember what it was when I woke up this morning. But I am going there to look for father—to his old home."

"And then—" began his sister.

"I don't know," he answered. "But we can't give up the search. We can never give up the search."

With a quick, firm step Philip Marsh came up the lane and neared the old stile. He had just come to the spot from which one first has a clear view of the farmhouse, when suddenly he saw something at the foot of one of the elm trees and paused.

It was a rag-covered human figure, beaten and bent and shrunken out of all resemblance to humanity. There was no hat upon his head and his thin gray hair was matted and discolored. The shoes were worn from his feet, which were black with clotted blood and the mud of the highway. He had no coat and only shreds of yellow linen clung to his torn and bleeding arms. His poor, worn body quivered and quaked beneath the tatters of dark and greasy clothing.

The man looked up as Philip paused. He looked up and Philip gazed into the eyes of his father. For a moment he was stunned and then he saw that the old man did not recognize him. He saw that he was only as a stranger to this man who, nevertheless, was his

father. The face before him was calm and peaceful and the eyes were clear and limpid, in odd contrast with the shockingly pinched and neglected form.

Philip went up to him and touched him on the shoulder. "Come home with me," he said.

His father gazed at him with bright, unseeing eyes. "Yes," he said, "I have come home. But there were three of us to go to the war and I am the only one to come home again." He turned towards the house. "Jennie is there and I have come home to her, but no one has come home to my mother and no one has come home to my little sister."

"You have come home to them all," his son answered.

"Perhaps. Still it isn't just the same. But I mustn't keep them waiting any longer."

He moved towards the stile with slow and painful steps. His son took his arm to assist him, but he seemed unconscious of the aching heart beside him. He spoke softly under his breath, but his son could not understand what he said. His face became gradually illumined by a radiant, tender smile, and the tears of youth came to his eyes.

Together they climbed the steps to the porch and entered the cool hall—this squalid, begrimed vagabond who had fought for the Union, and his haggard, careworn young son.

When they were in the hall the old man stopped and called out, "Mother, Faith, Jennie."

His voice was weak and cracked, but it reached the only one of those he called whom mortal voice could reach.

With tears raining down her cheeks and thick-coming sobs Faith Marsh was clasped to the breast of her only brother, returned to his childhood's home after thirty years, but returned too late. He called her "Jennie," and then his eyes closed and he reeled and was caught in the arms of his son.

Two days later, when Faith and Philip were watching at his bedside, he opened his eyes again. His son

leaned over him and he whispered, "Phil, where am I?"

"At home," was the answer.

"No, not really at home," he murmured. "They took my home away from me."

"You are in your father's home. And Aunt Faith is here and we are taking care of you."

The old man turned his eyes to the other side of the bed and they met his sister's. "Faith," he said, and smiled.

Then he seemed to go to sleep again, but after a while he was looking up at them once more.

"I remember everything," he said slowly and distinctly, "only I dont know how I came here, but it doesn't matter. I have come home—but only to go to my real home. I saw them a little while ago in my dream—the other two who went down the lane with me that day and never came back again, and mother and Jennie and our little girl who was taken away from us—they are all waiting for me—at home."

He seemed tired and closed his eyes. For a long time he lay still, so still that they thought he would never wake again, and then suddenly he started and his eyes were wide.

"Phil," he said, "we freed the negroes thirty years ago. We declared that man, created in the image of God, could not be bought and sold. But, oh! Phil, I see men and women and children of our own race, of our own blood,

> "'Slaves—in a land of light and law!
> Slaves—crouching on the very plains
> Where rolled the storm of Freedom's war.

"Oh, Phil, what is it that binds them? Oh, what is it, what is it? They fed the negroes so that they could work, but these people have no bread and can't get work to do. They are slowly starving, starving"

He dropped back exhausted on his pillow. Then a happy, peaceful smile came over his wan face and he whispered, "Philip, my boy, the white slave will be freed, too. I—see them—throwing off—the yoke. Help—them—Phil."

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